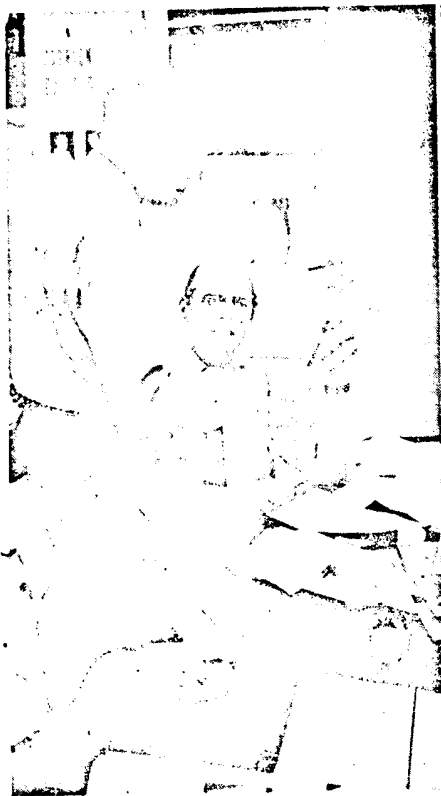


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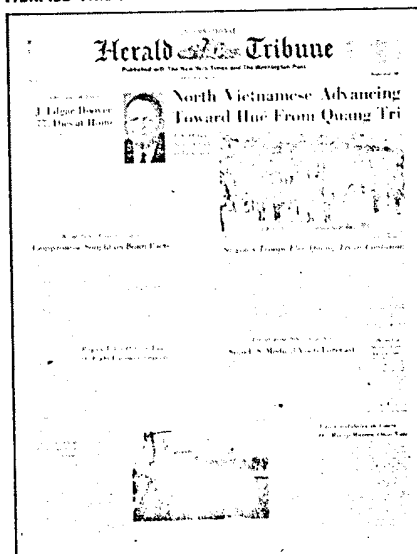


EDITOR WEISS (STANDING) IN CITY ROOM

New York *Times* in the best editorial health of its 85-year history.* Many newsmen believe that for its slim size—14 to 16 pages—the *Trib* is the most readable and informative daily published anywhere.

Where else, after all, can a reader get the best of both the *Post* and *Times*, expertly presented along with comics and commentary? As a bonus, there is also the *Trib's* own crew of offbeat freelancers who lend the paper a welcome

HERALD TRIBUNE FRONT PAGE



Mid-Atlantic Winner

Going abroad this summer? Afraid of losing touch with what's happening at home? Not to worry. Whether you wind up in Brussels or Bangkok, the *International Herald Tribune* will tell you about Charlie Brown's latest hang-up, what Chrysler stock is selling for, whether Willie Mays homered for the Mets, who won the Democratic presidential nomination and how, and what columnists from Art Buchwald to Bill Buckley make of it all.

Yet the Paris-based *Trib* (circ. 121,000) is no mere letter from home. It is far different from the daily described by *The New Yorker's* Janet Flanner as "the village newspaper" of the American expatriate colony in Paris, the favorite of Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound. Increasingly it serves to inform a widespread audience about both the U.S. and the world. It is read with respect in the power centers of Europe, where English is now the second language. Nineteen copies a day go to Peking, and the Kremlin also subscribes. Editor Murray "Buddy" Weiss, 48, who was the last managing editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*, talks of a "mid-Atlantic viewpoint" that implies a degree of detachment from both the U.S. and Europe.

The paper last week marked the fifth anniversary of its tripartite marriage with the Washington *Post* and

air of leisured whimsy. Souren Melikian, a Persian prince, covers art and artifact auctions with the colorful authority of both expert and buyer. Gastronome Waverly Root writes lovingly of rare, night-blooming mushrooms and the perils of absinthe, interspersed with an occasional reminiscence of Paris whores of the 1920s. Among *Trib* critics, Henry Pleasants comments on music with competence, and Thomas Quinn Curtis disagrees rather consistently—but stylishly—with almost everyone else on which movies are good and bad.

Broad Choice. Basically the *Trib* is an exercise in inspired deskmanship. The paper has only one full-time general reporter of its own, and the core of the operation consists of five copy editors working with Weiss in crowded quarters off the Champs-Élysées. Six nights a week, they cull streams of copy that issue from 16 Teletypes, providing the *Trib* with a broad choice that goes beyond the *Post's* and *Times's* output. Material also comes from the Los Angeles *Times* and Chicago's *Daily News*

*James Gordon Bennett Jr., self-exiled son of the New York *Herald's* founder, started the paper in 1887 as the Paris edition of the *Herald*. In 1935 it became the European edition of the New York *Herald Tribune*, which it still strongly resembles in typography. After the parent paper died in 1966, Publisher John Hay Whitney took on the *Post* and *Times* as partners in the Paris survivor.

and *Sun-Times*, in addition to a full range of U.S. and foreign news agencies. Weiss and his colleagues are free to choose whichever story says it best for the international reader. No copy quotas are imposed by the owner papers, and big names on both the *Post* and New York *Times* often find their stories either drastically shortened or entirely ignored by the *Trib*.

Though in many ways the *Trib* lives up to its claim of being "not fundamentally an American newspaper published abroad, but a newspaper published abroad by Americans," though its parentage is mongrelized, though a plethora of bylines now appears, Weiss manages nonetheless to keep something of the old New York *Herald Tribune's* tone. It is serious, but not solemn. New Yorkers notice a familiarity in some of the editorials, they are not imagining things. Harry Baehr, 64, once the New York paper's chief editorial writer, still contributes a few editorials each week—writing from New York.

To be broadly relevant to readers in the 70 countries it now reaches, however, the *Trib* must be edited to seem as if it has no local base. Homey coverage is anathema to Weiss. To report on New York City's last mayoral election, for instance, he ignored the voluminous file of the New York *Times* and published the Washington *Post's* version instead; the *Post* reporter "told in a few stories all you needed to know about it in Neuilly or Oslo." Yet Weiss can occasionally use his own brand of enterprise. During last December's Nixon-Pompidou meeting in the Azores, he sent his entire political staff, James Goldsborough, to cover the event. Goldsborough beat the competition—including staffers of both the *Post* and *Times*—to the main news about dollar devaluation by several hours, allowing the *Trib* to make its first deadline with the hottest international story of the moment.

Gilded Bird. Deadlines are a problem because of the intricate truck-train-plane system that hustles copies around the world. Distribution accounts for an astonishing 25% of the *Trib's* total production costs. The per-copy price is high, ranging from 28¢ in Paris to 75¢ in Tokyo, because most papers must be shipped out by air freight or chartered plane. Advertising rates are astronomical; it costs as much to place an ad in the *Trib* as in the Washington *Post*, which has more than four times the circulation. Yet there is no shortage of advertisers or readers. Nowadays, only 18% of the audience lives in France, v. 40% five years ago.

Prosperity is a relatively new fact of life at the *Trib*. For much of its history, it was a sink case, belying the efficacy of the owls with which Founder Bennett decorated the paper's original Paris office as a good-luck fetish. But the *Trib* has been solidly profitable since 1968, and an enormous owl still holds the place of honor in its offices. Appropriately, the metal bird is gilded.